

An Alzheimer's Lament: A Neuro State of Mind

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Perhaps only once... maybe twice... in a lifetime does a health care professional experience a true learning that impacts the life journey we all may experience. Consider the following experience.

During the 2017 Healthcare Advocate Tour, an older pharmacist friend (also a long-time musician) whom I had not seen for several years agreed to meet following his spouse's passing. His elder care giver had set up the meeting. After his first comment, I was shocked and suddenly realized I was being given the opportunity to understand how one Alzheimer's victim sees the end of life.

His opening comment was "I doubt you have been where my thoughts will take you". He continued to speak in amazing lucid phrases: "If I had ever been here before I would probably know what to do. It just makes we wonder what is going on. As I look at myself I can see my life before me. I am older now and I have more than I want but wasted too much time along the way. Now I am lonely and have no time to make up what the past caused me to be now".

He continued this lament: "It was sometimes hard to catch the wind and bend it to my will. Often it is hard to know how the story ends as the Road is long and takes it time... on that you can depend. It is like paranoia strikes deep and into your life it will creep. It starts when you are young and unafraid but catches you from behind and just takes you away. Maybe I will be whole again one day. My Soul knows where it has been and maybe I will be home again one day.

You need to know that at 6 AM in the morning I feel pretty good and by 7 AM I am amazed I am still here today. The sunlight helps me through the day as I wait for the sun to remold my body. I'll do anything I can to stay in Johnny's Garden".

It was at this point I realized that for my pharmacist friend and longtime musician, the amyloid plague associated with his Alzheimer's condition appeared to have avoided degrading the synapses involved with music memory and allowed the musical references to stay alive. I continue to this day to wonder why. Is it possible every individual with Alzheimer's has not lost certain areas of memory and can bring them to the present?

If many of the comments made by my pharmacist/musician friend seem familiar it is because they were words and phrases from several different songs by musicians David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and James Raymond. The pharmacist/musician grew up with these songs, embraced them and retained them.

His final comment before he fell asleep was "Please look what's going around and I must cry out... I am lonely. I am going to fly away".

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